

A, B

[REDACTED]

4.

A, B

[REDACTED] a Pathet Lao

soldier [REDACTED] The soldier claimed that about two months earlier he had personally observed Americans working with the North Vietnam Army near the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Vietnam. The Americans were not restrained in any manner and were free to move about without suspicion. The soldier said he had made trips on the Ho Chi Minh trail between North and South Vietnam and he had observed the Americans on one of those trips. [REDACTED]

A

[REDACTED] was not able to recontact this source.

5.

A, B

[REDACTED]

B
B
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the following details which did not appear in earlier reports:

a. - that the American PWs were skilled in ordnance and cooperated with the North Vietnamese by defusing unexploded ordnance.

b. - that the American PWs might have come to the area of the Plain of Jars, since defused bombs were found there on one occasion.

c. - that the American PWs were last known to be located in Sam Neua, as of early 1973.

d. - that the North Vietnamese had obtained the cooperation of the American PWs by exerting pressure until the PWs "broke."

e. - that the earliest report on the subject was received in 1968, that additional bits of information were received on various later dates, and that the last bit of information was received in 1973.

f. - that the information was obtained from usually reliable sources who reported seeing

Caucasians working for the North Vietnamese on the Ho Chi Minh trail and being told by Vietnamese soldiers that the individuals were Americans.

7. A confirmed American PW, Mr. Emmet Kay, was in Sam Neua shortly after the period in which the eight to ten American PWs would have been there. Mr. Kay was captured on 7 May 1973, was moved to the Sam Neua area on 11 June 1973, and held there in several locations until his release on 18 September 1974. Mr. Kay heard no rumor about a group of eight to ten American PWs or about any other Americans detained in the area.

A 8. Although it seems possible that the North Vietnamese could have obtained the services of a group of American officers in the manner suggested [REDACTED], there are several reasons for doubting that this happened. First, given the high volume of reporting from captured enemy soldiers and from refugees and ralliers, it seems likely that rumors of such a remarkable situation would have been picked up and reported through the interrogation and debriefing centers. Second, none of the returnees had been exploited in this manner. The returnees had been exploited for political and propaganda purposes, but not for this kind of labor. Third, experienced flyers say that almost no military pilots possessed the technical skills necessary for defusing unexploded ordnance. Fourth, it would appear to have been more in North Vietnamese interest to entrust such a job to their own

highly trained technicians or to skilled ordnance experts from friendly countries. On the other hand, the returnees had seen two American PWs who cooperated with the enemy. 2.6

And there were unconfirmed reports of collaborators.

9. A series of unconfirmed reports [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED] stated that nine American PWs were held in the vicinity of Mahaxay in September 1973. Mahaxay is in Central Laos, about 30 miles east of Takhek and sixty miles south of Lak Sao. One report said the nine were taken to Hanoi in September 1973. Another report said the nine were still in the area, at a detention camp near a town called Pha Katao, in March 1974. This information did not correlate to any known individual or group of PW/MIAs. The nine Americans captured in Laos and released in Operation Homecoming had all been moved out of Laos to Hanoi well before the end of 1972. The Mahaxay reports did not imply that the nine Americans had been defusing ordnance or cooperating in any way with the North Vietnamese. The Mahaxay reports remain unconfirmed in spite of extensive research and follow-up. They are mentioned [REDACTED]

A [REDACTED] to illustrate that such reports came from different areas, through various channels, and usually could not be confirmed.

A
10 The information concerning eight or ten American
PWs [REDACTED] of such a nature
that it cannot be [REDACTED] NIA/AF [REDACTED] further;
more, it is unlikely that his sources could have reported
enough information to establish beyond a reasonable doubt
that they had actually seen Americans, and not other
nationalities. He might have seen "Americans" for
intelligence purposes.



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

A, B
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] had two reports on live American based on information he considered reliable.

- A
A
A
A
1. From two independent sources, [REDACTED] learned in March-April 1975 of a single American who was last seen near Lak Sao in Khammouane province, Laos. The American was being held by the Vietnamese; [REDACTED] thought the Vietnamese were keeping him because of his technical expertise: they were using his skill to defuse mines and bombs. His sources had seen the American. He was not chained, but he was guarded.

[REDACTED] attempted to rescue this American by helicopter. He transported an agent to a location near Lak Sao. This agent was to rescue the American and return with him to a rendezvous point. The agent never returned to the agreed location.

A

Asked later in the conversation if he believed there were any Americans alive in Laos, [REDACTED] said no, except for that American last sighted near Lak Sao. His immediate recall of this American indicates how deeply convinced he is of the reliability of this report.

- A, B
2. The second report concerned 8-10 young American held by the Vietnamese. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] expressed the firm conviction that a group of Americans, 8-10 in number, are still being held by the North Vietnamese. They are collaborators, but collaborators in this sense: they "broke" under Vietnamese pressures and promised cooperation in exchange for survival and increased comforts (food, medicine, relative freedom, etc.). Their cooperation primarily involves technical knowledge relating to defusing unexploded ordnance. He referred repeatedly to opening American secrets; the reference was usually to the defusing of ordnance. It was also suggested these Americans could be used for their technical knowledge of American tactics.

A
A
The Vietnamese moved this group to locations where need for defusing of ordnance is greatest. [redacted] said they have been employed in Sam Neua, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and he suspected they may even have been employed on the Plain of Jars.

[redacted] is very certain this group is being held. There were "many, many reports" he thought related to this group from usually reliable sources over a long period of time.

The first reports came to him in 1968. These reports simply mentioned "some Americans without giving a number. Another report arrived in 1971. According to this report, there was still only "one group of Americans" staying in North Viet Nam to help defuse mines. In 1973-74, the group was specified as being 8-10 in number.

A
A
The North Vietnamese were holding them help defuse mines. The last report of this group of American pilots came in 1975. [redacted] sources did not talk to the Americans, but saw them working and asked the Vietnamese soldiers who they were. They were identified as Americans. No names were given. Nothing personal was known about them. Their last known location was Sam Neua in early 1973. According to [redacted] this group was composed of the same men throughout this period.